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'No profile' image frustrating to CIA official

By RICK BOLTON
Post Reporter

The CIA's public relations chief Monday called his job frustrating because he cannot tell the public 99 percent of what he knows.

J. William Doswell, 55, the agency's external affairs director, told the Houston chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators the CIA doesn't go looking for publicity. "It knocks on our door."

The reason he cannot make



DOSWELL

public much information is because doing so would divulge the CIA's sources and methods abroad, he said.

CIA director William Casey told him when he took the job that "we're not going to be a low profile agency, we're going to be a no profile agency," he related. But he added the agency had decided to loosen up as much as possible.

He said the CIA public relations job was "predicated on the philosophy we are a secret agency and you can't disclose secrets, or it's not secret."

A former newspaper reporter, publisher and public relations businessman from Richmond, Va., Doswell said he had been impressed with the dedication of his CIA co-workers since he took over the chief of public relations job in July 1981.

Doswell said the CIA had lost much of

its credibility with Congress and the American people by 1976 after the agency's involvement with domestic spying was revealed.

He said the agency deserves to have lost its credibility because of such spying, which has since been turned over to the FBI.

Because of the public and Congress' closer scrutiny of CIA activities, Doswell said he believes public confidence has been restored in the agency in the past five years.

Since he took over as public relations chief, he said he has tried to stress to agency officials that "you have to have dialogue to get your point across with Congress and the public."

The CIA had been isolated and insulated from the public until the early 1970s, he said.

Doswell described the CIA's job as gathering intelligence to allow the president to make foreign policy decisions in the national interest.

Although the CIA works directly for the president, he said, it comes under the close scrutiny of Congress to prevent it from abusing its power. He said the agency never makes public the number of foreign agents or the amount of its budget since that information would be useful to other nations.

The CIA briefs some reporters who go abroad but not on the basis that information is expected in return from them, he said.

He would be in favor of legislation to make it more difficult for the Russians to gain access to U.S. technological research and development, he said.

Legislation is in the works to make it a felony to reveal the names of foreign CIA agents, he said. He said two agents were once killed because their names were revealed.